

Message Text

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TAGS: PINS, PINT, SPO
SUBJECT: APRIL 25TH IN THE AZORES

REFS: A. LISBON 3072; B. LISBON 3051; C. PONTA DELGADA 0272

SUMMARY: APRIL 25TH PASSED PEACEFULLY IN PONTA DELGADA,
AND TENSIONS HAVE EASED SOMEWHAT WITH THE FREEING OF THE FIVE
PERSONS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSAULT AGAINST
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ANTONIO ALMEIDA SANTOS. HOWEVER,
THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, SQUEEZING MAXIMUM LOCAL
POLITICAL BENEFIT FROM THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S RECENT MISSTEPS
IN THE AZORES, CONTINUES TO CALL FOR THE RECALL OF THE RIOT
POLICE UNIT. END SUMMARY

1. NO INCIDENTS: THE APRIL 25TH CELEBRATIONS IN PONTA DELGADA,
FEATURING A PARADE BY LOCAL MILITARY UNITS, WENT OFF WITH
NO DISRUPTION WHATSOEVER. THE REPLACEMENT RIOT POLICE UNIT
WHICH ARRIVED APRIL 24 (NOT A PARATROOP COMPANY AS ERRONEOUSLY
REPORTED IN REF C) WAS KEPT WELL OUT OF SIGHT. ON THE MORNING
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OF THE 25TH, THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) DISTRIBUTED
A LEAFLET CALLING UPON THE PUBLIC TO REMAIN CALM AND NOT TO
RESPOND TO THE "PROVOCATIONS" OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT AIMED
AT BRINGING ABOUT A STATE OF SEIGE IN THE ARCHIPELAGO AND THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ASSEMBLY.

2. BUT FEW SPECTATORS: AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

(RGA) PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL AND SEVERAL REGIONAL SECRETARIES WERE PRESENT. HOWEVER, POPULAR ATTENDANCE WAS MINISCULE, SUGGESTING AN INFORMAL BOYCOTT BY LOCAL CITIZENS.

3. NEW RGA PROTEST AGAINST RIOT POLICE: ON APRIL 24, THE RGA ISSUED A SECOND COMMUNIQUE EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE RIOT POLICE IN PONTA DELGADA. THE NOTE ADDED THAT THE RGA HAD ASKED REGIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT DR. ALVARO MONJARDINO, INVITED BY PRESIDENT EANES TO ATTEND THE APRIL 25TH FESTIVITIES IN LISBON, TO URGE THE PRESIDENT TO HONOR ITS REQUEST TO WITHDRAW THE POLICE. (COMMENT: IN PRIVATE, MONJARDINO, A POLITICAL INDEPENDENT, HAS BEEN SEVERE IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT FOR SENDING ALMEIDA SANTOS AND THE RIOT POLICE TO THE AZORES. HOWEVER, HE ALSO VIEWS THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S HARD-LINE REACTION AS POTENTIALLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO THE AUTONOMY PROCESS. END COMMENT)

4. ARRESTED AZOREANS FREED: A LISBON JUDGE ORDERED THE RELEASE OF THE FIVE AZOREANS ARRESTED IN PONTA DELGADA AND FLOWN TO LISBON APRIL 23 IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSAULT AGAINST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ALMEIDA SANTOS. THE JUDGE RULED THE ARRESTS ILLEGAL FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE. THE FIVE RETURNED TO A HERO'S WELCOME AT THE PONTA DELGADA AIRPORT APRIL 25TH STAGED BY

SEVERAL HUNDRED FLA MILITANTS.
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5. COMMENT: BOTH THE RGA AND THE FLA CONTINUE TO REAP THE PROPAGANDA WINDFALL STEMMING FROM FROM WHAT IS GENERALLY VIEWED HERE AS THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S OMINOUS OR AT LEAST INEPT AZOREAN DECISIONS DURING THE PAST TEN DAYS. AZOREAN-BORN INTERIOR MINISTER JAIME GAMA, WHOM THE RGA HOLDS PRINCIPALLY RESPONSIBLE, HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR PARTICULARLY BITTER CRITICISM. NONETHELESS, THE RELEASE OF THE FIVE DETAINEES HAS EASED TENSIONS HERE SOMEWHAT.
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